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THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY.

The Academy House, of which the foregoing is a correct sketch, is situated on the west side of Grafton-street, nearly opposite the Provost's house. It is not distinguished by any architectural ornament.

In a country like Ireland, abounding with antiquities—high in reputation for ancient literature, and producing men of acknowledged talents in every walk of genius, it was long a national reflection that at a most enlightened period there existed no society of men under whose sanction and auspices these antiquities might be investigated, and the fugitive productions of genius, in other departments of literature, cherished and preserved. So early as the year 1683 an attempt was made by Mr. Mollyneaux to establish a society in Ireland, similar to the Royal Society in London. The temper of the times seemed very unfavourable to such an institution. Though aided by the talents and local knowledge of the celebrated Sir W. Petty, who was elected its president, it languished for five years, and finally expired amid the distractions of the country. In 1744 a Physico-Historical Society was established. This Society appointed a committee to explore the antiquities of Ireland, and proposed to examine each separate county by a statistical survey—a plan which has since been so laudably acted on, but which yet remains to be completed. Under their auspices the indefatigable Smyth published his Histories of Waterford, Cork and Kerry. In the short space, however, of two years, their regular sittings ceased also, displaying a most extraordinary degree of national apathy in a country abounding with such testimony of former arts, and such capabilities

for investigating them; but two transitory efforts were made to explore them, comprising an interval of seven years, in so long a period. In the memorable year 1782, however, a new and general impulse seems to have been imparted to the human faculties in this country, and the investigation of civil rights called forth an emulation in every liberal art. A number of gentlemen, principally members of the University, associated together this year, for the purpose of investigating and communicating useful and entertaining knowledge. They assembled once a week, and each person read his productions in turn. Into this society were admitted, from time to time, such persons as were eminent in the different walks of literature in Ireland, till at length the society increased to such magnitude that it was deemed necessary to give it a corporate form, to ensure its future permanence and respectability. In the commencement of the year 1786, it was incorporated by act of parliament under the name of the Royal Irish Academy, for the study of polite literature, science, and antiquities. The preamble of the act states, 'that Ireland was in ancient time conspicuous for her schools and seminaries of learning, and produced many persons eminent in every branch of science,' and that 'lately several persons in the city of Dublin had met together for their mutual improvement in the above studies, to which every encouragement should be given every where, especially in Ireland.'

It consists of a Patron, (his Majesty,) a Visitor, (the Lord Lieutenant,) a President, and a Council of twenty-one including four Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, Librarian, and two Secretaries, which is sub-divided into three Committees—the first, of science; the second, of polite literature; the third, of antiquities.

The Council meet on the first, second, and third Mondays of every month, at three o'clock, and the Academy on the fourth, at eight o'clock in the evening. In addition to a large apartment for meetings of the Society, ornamented with portraits of their Presidents, Lord Charlemont, Mr. Kirwan, and Dr. Brinkley, Bishop of Cloyne, it has also a beautiful library, recently erected, in which there is an excellent collection of Irish MSS. among which the Books of Lecan, Ballymote, Mc. Egan, and the original autograph of the Annals of the Four Masters will be found. Several very valuable works have recently been added. The members can consult the books at pleasure. The Society annually bestow premiums for the best essays on given subjects, and persons not members are at liberty to become competitors. The premiums are allocated out of the interest of a fund of £1500, bequeathed for the purpose by Col. Burton Conyngham. The successful essays form a portion of the transactions of the Academy, which now amount to seventeen volumes of exceedingly valuable and interesting matter. Members are elected by ballot, and an entrance fee of five guineas is required, with a subscription of two guineas per annum. Parliament grants to this Institution £500 per annum.

It may be well to notice here that it was chiefly owing to the pressing invitation of this Academy, in connection with Trinity College and the Royal Dublin Society, that the British Association held their fifth general meeting in Dublin.

MEETINGS OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

In our last we gave a summary of the preliminary Proceedings of the British Association, we now proceed to make the promised extracts. We should, perhaps, here mention, in reference to the foregoing engraving of the Royal Irish Academy, that in the Library of that institution the meetings of the General Committee and Local Council were held every day, while in the Council Room the Section of Anatomy and Medicine held its meetings.

GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY.

In none of the various meetings of the Association did the impulse to assemble themselves together appear stronger, or the gratification afforded of a higher order, than in those of the Geological Section. Nor can any read the statements given in our brief report without admitting that an astonishing progress has recently been made in Geological Science, not only as it regards those vast and extraordinary relics of former worlds and states of existence—rescued from their tombs by modern geologists, and held up to the contemplation of philosophers, who gaze, with equal awe and admiration, at such new manifestations of the infinity of the creative power and will—but even in the more practical, and, shall we say, more useful, application of the science to the investigation of the various formations of which our own island is composed.

"On Monday Mr. Griffith presented his Geological Map of Ireland, the result of many years' research and labour, assisted in part by the publications of Weaver, Conybeare, Buckland, and Berger. As an example of the inaccuracies of existing maps of Ireland, Mr. Griffith stated that in Arrowsmith's map, Benwee Head is placed twenty miles north of the parallel of Sligo, though it is actually due west of that town. Mr. G. then proceeded to point out the remarkable position of the mountain masses. They occur on the margin of the island, and enclose the great central limestone plain—an arrangement which, he observed, shortens the courses of the rivers, rising as they do in the higher grounds, and rapidly descending to the sea. The Shannon is an exception, having a course of 140 miles; but it is also affected by the peculiarity alluded to, its stream falling eighty feet in the first twenty miles of its course, and only eighty feet more in the remaining 120. On the great plain, which occupies the centre of the island, numerous beds of gravel occur, called Escars, which, though constant in direction, when considered in reference to small spaces, are variable when the comparison extends over greater limits. Mr. Griffith considers the great bogs as due to these accumulations of gravel, which, by damming in the water, facilitate the growth of sphagnum palustre. Under the bogs are deep deposits of marl, underlaid by clay and gravel, which further support the idea of ancient lakes. The marl was stated to be in one instance forty feet thick. Mr. Griffith, confining himself on this occasion to the sedimentary rocks, commenced his illustrations by those of a more crystalline character, such as gneiss, mica slate, &c.; and stated that he considered the great groups of Ireland as corresponding to those of Scotland; particularly the Northern to the Grampians, and the Mourne to the Dumfriesshire Mountains. The general direction of stratification is N.E. and S.W., though in Tyrone it is more nearly N. and S., being referred to a local axis; and in the south nearly E. and W. The beds of primary limestone, associated with the primary schists, are not continuous, though they occur in lines: when intersected by trap dykes, they become dolomitic. The quartz rock which is also associated with these schists, is sometimes very remarkable. At Dunmore Head it has the structure of orbicular granite, or of some varieties of trap, for which it is often mistaken. Mica slate is unequally distributed: it is abundant in the north and west, less general in the south, and deficient in the Mourne or Down district. Mica also, as a mineral, is not general, being in the Mourne Mountains often replaced by horn-blende. Proceeding to the transition schists, Mr. Griffith stated his conviction that they would require subdivision whenever materials had been collected for the purpose, in the same manner as those of Wales had been divided by Mr. Murchison. For example—in the older schists, neither conglomerates nor organic remains are found. In the newer grey-wackes, the slates alternate with sandstone; and again, in the still newer strata, limestone containing fossils alternates with the upper portion of the schists. The old red sandstone is also considered by Mr. Griffith divisible into two or three sub-sections—the upper alternating with the mountain limestone. Mr. Griffith then described the several coal fields of Ireland, pointing out the distinction between those of the north and south—bituminous coal being confined to the northern collieries. The more recent sedimentary rocks were then briefly described; more especially the new red sandstone which underlies the lias and chalk on the S. and E. of Antrim, and is also found in Monaghan, and may be traced thence